

**AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES**  
**June 8, 2006**

**Members Present:** Al Byam (Co Chair), Doris Holden (Treasurer), Ed Kaler, Tom McAuley, Rosemary Kofler (Secretary)

**Absent:** Frank Lattuca, Barbara Sutherland, Elsie Fetterman, Susan Whitbourne

**Select Board Liaison:** absent

**Staff Present:** Nancy Pagano (Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Assistant Director/Services), Karen Erman (Administrative Assistant), Marlene Barnett (Program Coordinator)

**Guests:** Marge Babb, Tamari Rosa

**Welcome:**

Al Byam, Co Chair called the Council on Aging meeting to order at 9:09 AM.

**Minutes of May Meeting:**

Ed made a correction for the Parking Sub-Committee. The minutes were accepted as amended.

**Senior Trust Treasurer's Report:**

Doris updated the investment information and reported that there are no new bills. The Treasurer's report was accepted.

**CONTINUING BUSINESS**

**June 19<sup>th</sup> Volunteer Recognition:**

Nancy reported that volunteers are responding to the invitation to the event. The number of volunteers expected will determine which room will be used for the event. Bob Johnson will be the keynote speaker. The Eveline Sears Senior Activist Awards will be presented.

**Budget Update:**

Town Meeting made no further cuts beyond the \$12,000 from our personnel budget, or one day of Marlene's time. There was an increase in the Formula Grant money (not the \$7.00 per elder we hoped for, but \$6.30 per elder) which will give us an additional \$1,281.82. Toward the end of the year we will see how that can factor into increasing Marlene's time.

Nancy remarked that kind donations to the Senior Center Club from various groups, plus proceeds from the Bazaar and Tag Sale, have made it possible for us to get through the fiscal year.

**Summer Picnic for COA and Staff:**

It was decided to not plan a picnic at this time. Getting together for a social lunch after the fall retreat was suggested instead.

**SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE**

**Nominating Committee:**

Doris and Elsie submitted the following slate of officers: **Chair:** Barbara Sutherland, **Vice Chair:** Thomas McAuley **Secretary:** Rosemary Kofler **Senior Trust Treasurer:** Doris Holden

The committee recommended Daniel Clapp and David Yaukey for membership on the COA. Those names have been submitted to the Town Manager, who appoints new members.

**Transportation:**

Al reported that next week is the PVTA's final Board Meeting for the fiscal year. They will vote on the budget. Seven Van bids were submitted on June 9. They are due to be in place by the end of September. Fixed route bids also went out. The Board is in the process of searching for the new administrator who they hope to have in place by the end of July. Al will keep the COA informed as vendors are selected for the Van service.

**Parking:**

Ed is still waiting for a response to the letter he sent to the Town Manager on May 9. He has sent a follow-up e-mail and will call next week if he still has no response.

Doris once again raised the issue of the misuse of the limited parking spaces for seniors in the Ann Whalen lot. The signs at the lot are not clearly posted and some people who park there do not display a permit.

**Highland Valley Elder Services:**

Maura reported on the event that took place on June 5 at Look Park. It was designed to attract Service Providers and Baby Boomers and to assess Boomers needs as they age. It was valuable for networking and showing the services available. There were several speakers who talked about the options available to those in the 60-80 age category. Maura observed that there seemed to be more Service Providers than Baby Boomers at the event.

**NEW BUSINESS****Retreat for Long-Range Planning:**

Nancy stated that preparing for the needs of Baby Boomers is part of the focus of the COA long-range planning. It is important for us to have input into the Town's overall long-range plan and advocate for the things that will be helpful to older people. We will plan a Retreat when the new Town Manager is in place. Nancy proposed the date of September 14 but Rosemary will not be available then and Nancy would like to have everyone present. Since the Mass COA meets October 11-13, our next COA meeting is scheduled for October 19. That date was proposed for the Retreat.

**Annual Report for Town:**

Nancy passed out a copy of the Town Annual Report. Two years ago, Jean Haggerty, as Chair of the COA, submitted a separate report on the COA accomplishments for the year. That report supplemented the Senior Center Annual Report that Nancy wrote. Nancy mentioned that the Co-Chairs could do likewise this year. Nancy said this has been a terrific Council and that it has accomplished a great deal.

**COA STAFF REPORTS****ADA Compliance:**

Maura reported that the Town is putting together a transition plan to comply with ADA requirements. A committee was established headed by Eunice Torres. Each Town Department has received an ADA checklist for the physical layout of their office space. Ray Lemek, Head of Maintenance, is doing that for the entire Bangs building. Maura and Nancy are working on the accessibility of services, programs, policies, and forms. For example, forms need to be made available in alternative formats such as large print or Braille for the visually impaired. There will be a Town policy that if someone needs an alternative format for something it will require a request three weeks in advance.

Al suggested that Maura contact the UMass Office of Disability Services for resources. Tom expressed concern about being spread too thin by taking on the compliance task. Maura explained that the ADA is a Federal law and it must be done or we risk being sued. The Justice Department needs assurance that we have a plan in place and are working on achieving ADA compliance even if everything is not already available.

**Psychological Services Satellite Office Progress Report:**

Maura and Nancy met with Dr. Chris Overtree (Head of Psych Services at UMass) Edie Howe, Susan Whitbourne, and Dr. Rebecca Ready (a neuropsychologist at UMass). It was a positive meeting and there don't appear to be any stumbling blocks to starting the program in September. They are working

on an assessment tool to show how helpful this program has been to seniors in order to make a strong case for future funding.

**Bread and Produce Truck Driver:**

Marlene reported that Rafael Reys will not be the new truck driver to pick up food from Whole Foods, Atkins, and Panera. A new person by the name of Carol Hepburn (the Animal Control Officer) will be the driver. Over 120 people have participated in the program this year.

**Senior Health and Fitness:**

Marlene reported that this year the Senior Center participated in the National Senior Health and Fitness Day for the first time. Twenty four people participated in the one hour exercise event led by Susan Roitman, Yoga instructor. Subway sponsored the event and provided 24 tee shirts with the National Senior Health and Fitness logo and over 3,000 discount coupons. Maura reported that Marlene also worked hard to put together a raffle and drawing for local merchants.

**Anita left for new job:**

Nancy reported that Anita Chan-Randall left last week and began her new job at Meridian. Anita has been a great worker and her departure is a tremendous loss to the Senior Center.

**Tamari Rosa, new volunteer:**

Marlene introduced Tamari Rosa who will be with us 24 hours per week. She has good office management skills, good computer skills and shows attention to detail. She will be at the Senior Center until September when she goes back to school at UMass. Tamari said that she enjoys being at Bangs.

Nancy stated we are looking to start a new policy regarding the use of our office phones. Some seniors abuse the favor. We want to tighten up yet remain benevolent.

Karen raised the issue of the Town suggestion of charging for use of space at Bangs. She and Nancy met with the Town Manager to present their thoughts on what the charges might be. They would charge an hourly rate for non-profit groups and a different rate for for-profit groups. They gave the Manager a list of the number of users plus a list of all the groups that have come into Bangs over the last 5 or 8 years. The Town Manager requested that they come up with a dollar figure for what the Bangs would take in now with current usage. Karen will try to do that. The Town Manager will present that information to the Select Board.

Al is concerned that charging would change the mission of the Bangs Community Center, which is to protect and serve the citizens of the community, rather than taking from them.

Doris wondered if Pelham could deliver Meals on Wheels to their own residents. Nancy said that the Pelham COA is struggling and has been unable to find any drivers, thus Amherst does their deliveries. Even though we are compensated by HVES at \$.91 per meal delivered, we pay the drivers \$.31 per mile for mileage and the increased cost of gas has a significant impact. Any donations that the meal recipients make go to Highland Valley, not to us.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:18 AM.

**The next COA meeting will be on July 13, 2006 at 9:00 AM.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Rosemary Kofler, Secretary